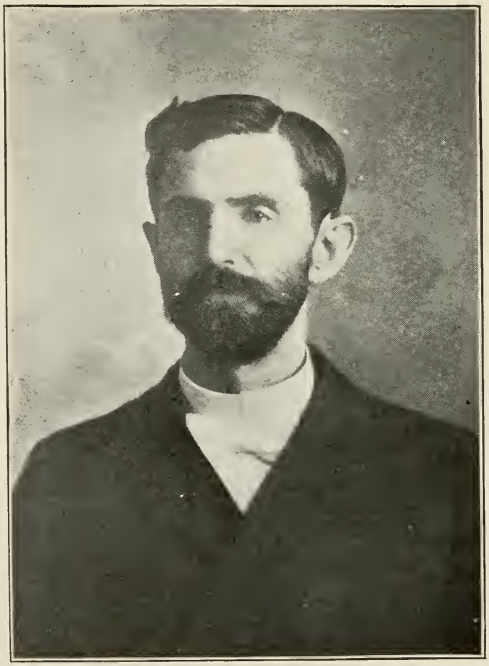
NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07994711 9

MOTHER'S ANSWERED PRAYER.

By Rev. P. H. FLEMING.

(Fleming)
ZIAB



Rev. P. H. FLEMING, Burlington, N. C.

MOTHER'S ANSWERED PRAYER.

BY
REV. P. H. FLEMING,
PASTOR CHRISTIAN CHURCH, BURLINGTON, N. C.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR
BY THE CHRISTIAN SUN, ELON COLLEGE, N. C.
1905

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1905, by The Christian Sun, Elon College, N. C., in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

PRESSES OF EDWARDS & BROUGHTON,
RALEIGH, N. C.

To the memory of my sainted

Mother

this little volume is tenderly inscribed.

INTRODUCTON.

"There is no great and no small
To the Soul that maketh all:
And where it cometh, all things are;
And it cometh everywhere."

"There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind, is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent. * * * It is this universal nature which gives worth to particular men and things. * * * This human mind wrote history and this must read it. The Sphinx must solve her own riddle. If the whole of history is in one man, it is all to be explained from individual experience. * * * In other words, there is properly no History; only Biography. Every soul must know the whole lesson for itself." So wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson of "History."

In the following pages somewhat of history is set forth from individual experience. One soul has been touched with a high lesson and "Mother's Answered Prayer" is the product of that soul's learning and utterance. The lesson is of

a high theme, and the reader will somehow feel that his own, and not the author's experience, is being related. For in this Christian land, where is the boy or girl, man or woman, who in overcoming temptation has not felt the help of a power more than himself or herself, or in yielding felt that other hands than those of self were being stained, or facing life's serious problems felt that "Mother prayed for me, or father did, or friend, and if I succeed, as God helping me I will, it will be by virtue of prayers uttered by other lips, and more worthy than my own?" For into every life that overcomes there is poured strength from many sources other than its own. Good mothers and great explain great men; and the boundless faith of a dying mother is the key to the boundless labors of many a stalwart son. There is yet hope for the boy who has had, or now has, a praying mother. But the world may well stop to pity the boy or girl, it matters not what the other accomplishments and acquirements may be, for whom no devoted mother or godly father has ever uttered a fervent prayer.

The following pages tell the life story, in the plainest and most straight-forward fashion, of a man now, a boy then, for whom his mother prayed. While yet in early childhood, and without knowledge of prayer and its significance, that mother passed out into the spirit land and the child was left an orphan to face the trials and

temptations of a none too friendly world. Not till that sainted mother's prayer was answered in his own life did he know aught of its utterance. He is himself a living example, well known and much loved for his faithful service to humanity, of "Mother's Answered Prayer." If any doubt that prayer is answered in this world, let them read with hope and faith these pages.

The printed page reveals the author and needs no word of introduction. This "foreword" is only written to let the reader know that at least one other than the writer prays God's blessings upon it, and having been himself much edified and benefited by reading, sometimes with tears, all the time with joy and a grateful heart, the manuscript, believes sincerely, and fervently hopes, that others will be helped by a reading of these printed pages. For most truly has the author written, not to add one more book to the multitude gone before, but because he had a message, his soul a loving thought, which he must needs give utterance to. The reader may not think the utterance proportionate, but no one more quickly than the author, we are sure, would agree with the words of Emerson, "We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will

not have His work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise, shall give him no peace." We freely bespeak for the reading something of that peace that the author has enjoyed in preparing these pages of "Mother's Answered Prayer."

J. O. Atkinson.

PREFACE.

The noblest heritage that parents can give to their children, is that of a Christian parentage. The Psalmist David says, "I have been young and now I am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Our God is a just and loving Father, and though He visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him: yet He sheweth mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments. In Deuteronomy 7: 8 we read, "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations."

I know of no higher eulogy to pronounce upon my parents than this, that they gave to me a Christian birth and the attendant blessings thereof. My parents and my grandparents were Christians. I count that a noble heritage. I mention this, because in the following narrative, we trace in the history of a life, something of the Christian influence of parents, and a mother's prayer for her little son, then between eight and nine years of age.

P. H. FLEMING.

BURLINGTON, N. C.

CONTENTS.

		PAGE.
I.	PRAYER	13
II.	PARENTAGE AND BIRTH	14
III.	RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY LIFE	17
IV.	MOTHER'S SICKNESS AND DEATH	26
V.	FATHER'S ILLNESS AND DEATH	36
VI.	WHY WAS FATHER NOT SPARED?	42
VII.	THE CALL TO PREACH	48
VIII.	HIS FIRST SERMON	61
IX.	MOTHER'S PRAYER ANSWERED	70
X.	IS MOTHER NEAR?	82
XI.	A VISIT TO THE OLD HOME	90
XII.	CONCLUSION	95
	"TO MY MOTHER." POSTLUDE	97

MOTHER'S ANSWERED PRAYER.

CHAPTER I.

PRAYER.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast."

"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near."

"Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high."

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of death,
He enters heaven with prayer."

"Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways;
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry: 'Behold he prays.'"

"O thou! by whom we come to God,
The life, the truth, the way,
The path of prayer thyself hast trod;
Lord! teach us how to pray."

CHAPTER II.

PARENTAGE AND BIRTH.

In a Southern country home, in Carolina, there was born on the 3d day of August, 1862, a little boy, the subject of this sketch. He was of Christian parentage, and was born in the Christian home of his grandparents. He was his mother's first born, and she called him Henry. The war between the North and the South was at that time fiercely raging; but Henry's father was yet at home. A younger brother of Henry's father had volunteered to take his place in the army, in order that Henry's father might remain at home. This younger brother was not yet of military age, and he said that he had only himself to look after and to care for, while his older brother had a family. It was a noble example of brotherly love and devotion: the willingness to take a brother's place in the hour of danger, and if needs be of death, in order that a brother who had others dependent upon him might remain at home with those he loved, and thus shelter, protect and care for them.

This arrangement did not last long, for when this younger brother became of military age, he took his own place in Lee's army, and by his side stood this older brother, who had left all—home, wife, child—in obedience to duty and to his coun-

try's call. They were in Company C, 46th Regiment, Cook's Brigade, Heath's Division, and A. P. Hill's Corps.

Once when they were under fire of the enemy, and were lying flat upon the ground, and the elder brother had his head on the younger's feet, a shell burst near them and seriously wounded the younger brother. He was unconscious for some time. When consciousness returned, one of the first things he remembered was his older brother asking him about his future. Under shot and shell his thoughts turned to the spiritual condition of his brother, who he thought was now dying. He recovered, however, minus an arm. In 1864, about the Crater at Petersburg, Va., Henry's father was taken prisoner, and carried to Point Lookout. After General Lee surrendered and the war was declared ended, it was some three months or more before Henry's father could get home. Henry was now nearly three years old. His mother had resided during the war with her husband's parents; and it was to the old, old home that Henry's father returned when the war was over. Of the four brothers that entered the bloody and hard-fought battles in the war between the States of the North and of the South, three returned to the old homestead alive. One was brought back dead, before the war closed. There was great rejoicing in that home when the three soldier boys returned to the

old home, in their tattered and worn suits of Confederate gray. The gray-bearded father, and mother, the younger brothers and sisters, and Henry's mother, all rejoiced. The war was over, and nearly everything had been lost, except love, truth, devotion to duty, and faith in God; these all remained, together with true manhood and womanhood, to grace, make happy and hopeful; and to build once more beautiful and peaceful Southern homes.

CHAPTER III.

RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY LIFE.

Not long after the return of Henry's father from the war, to the old home, his parents moved some two miles from his grandparents, and set up housekeeping on their own account. His mother kept house and his father tilled the soil. There were many difficulties confronting the home-builders of those days. All business was in an unsettled condition. The future looked dark and apparently had within it but little hope. Henry's parents never owned a slave, but in the new order of things brought about by the result of the war, and congressional legislation, they felt some of the evils which came in that period of Southern history, known as "Reconstruction." But with a firm trust in God, believing that He rights the wrongs and that He delivers those who trust in Him, out of all their troubles, they hopefully and cheerfully pursued their daily avocations. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and He delighteth in His way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand. Ps. 37: 23-24.

Henry's mother was a "crown to her husband, and her price was far above rubies. She looked well to the ways of her household. She ate not

the bread of idleness. She stretched forth her hands to the needy. She opened her mouth with wisdom, and her tongue uttered the law of kindness. She feared God, and safely trusted in Him. A prudent wife is from the Lord, and a woman that feareth the Lord shall be praised."

Henry remembers very little about this new home and the difficulties which confronted his parents in their first home-building. It is best that he does not. God sometimes kindly veils from our eyes the difficulties, struggles, heart-aches and tears of those whom we love, when we are powerless to aid or to soothe. Among the recollections of this his new home, there is not the slightest sorrow of any character. Not a cross word, not a sigh, not a tear. He was young, and to him it is all joy and sunshine. His first recollection of childhood is a happy childhood with joy and sunshine everywhere. For him the birds sang, the flowers bloomed, and a negro boy told wild and weird stories of the long-ago, or of hobgoblins, jack-o'-lanterns, wild creatures of the forest, of ghosts which were believed to wander in deserted houses and to linger about the graves of the sleeping dead, and about the wonderful witches and wizards which were thought to come and to go at will. But Henry believed that these things never harmed the good.

It was always a very great pleasure to Henry to go with his father and mother to see his grand-

parents. It was his other home. Little did he then dream or think that the home of his grandparents was soon to become his only home. Henry's parents were devoted to him, and bestowed a great deal of care on him, as also did his grandparents, whom he never ceased to call "Pa" and "Mammy," even when he had grown to be a man. His own father and mother he called "Papa" and "Mamma." After remaining on this rented farm for about one year, they moved some twenty miles distant and settled on a farm of their own. This was in the fall of the year 1866. When they first went to housekeeping they had rented or leased a farm from an old gentleman near the old home place. But now they had property of their own, and they settled upon it, thinking perhaps there to spend their days, and there to share life's joys and sorrows together, and to fight life's battles as one. The way seemed to be brightening. There was much joy and gladness in that home. They saw not the gathering cloud, heard not its distant mutterings, and its forked lightnings flashed not as yet before their eyes. The rainfall of tears fell not as yet upon the mother's rosy cheeks, nor upon the sun-browned face of the father; nor from the eyes of the little ones who threw their arms about mother's neck, and climbed into papa's lap for glad good-night kisses. But a cloud of deep sorrow was gathering. Yet God was in that cloud. The cloud had

its rainbow of promise, and when the mists shall have cleared away we shall then know why that cloud came. But not now. It was a happy family. Love was in that home. The house consisted of a two-story frame building, fronting south. It had a porch in front and a rock chimney at each end. On the west end by the side of the chimney was a door which opened out upon a small porch. In the northwest corner of the yard stood the kitchen, and west of the kitchen stood the stables on a flint-rock knoll. Some distance from the house in a westerly direction was a spring of excellent water at the foot of a steep hill. Approaching the house was a long lane, with farm lands on each side. In the front yard stood a beautiful mimosa tree; and here also were quite a number of Paradise trees. North of the house were wild mulberry, walnuts, and oaks. East of the house was the garden, and between the house and the garden was a row of cedar trees and holly bushes. The yard was large and well shaded. It was inclosed, and all together it made a delightful place to play. And here under the mulberry's leafy shade, or watching the humming bird flit from flower to flower inhaling nectar sweet, in lane, in garden, about the barn and the farm, Henry spent many of his childhood's happy hours. The west room of the house was known as "Mamma's room," and here it was at night-fall that the family gathered so

peaceful and happy. Here it was they knelt in prayer at evening tide, when the day's work was done. From his mother's room Henry watched the falling rain or the beautiful snow beating against the window pane. Here it was that Henry fell asleep on his little bed, right beside his mother's, when his little prayer had been said, and the good-night kisses given. And there he quietly slept till rosy morn, while mother and angels kept watch.

There were born unto Henry's parents four children, two boys and two girls. One of the girls died in infancy. Some one said that her name was Kate, but if she ever had a name given her, Henry remembers it not. But God knew her, and remembered her when she reached the pearly gates, and Jesus received her I am sure, because He loves little children. Jesus said when He dwelt on the earth in human form: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them." And perhaps the angels named her when they carried her to Jesus. If so, I know they gave her a beautiful name. Henry's brother and remaining sister lived, and together they shared the sorrows which soon befell the family. Henry was the oldest child of the four, and he was less than ten when his mother died. His brother was five or six and his

sister some two or three years old when the home was broken up by death. At this time the family consisted of husband and wife and three children; and it is the history of the oldest child—a boy—Henry by name, that we wish to trace in the remarkable answer to his mother's dying prayer. Henry often said when he became a man, that "What I am, is the result of Christian parentage, Christian training, and mother's prayers through Christ Jesus, the Saviour."

He realizes that as an individual he has had to decide against sin and in favor of righteousness; that he has repented of sin and confessed Christ in the forgiveness of sins. But, O! the blessed help that has come from Christian parents and from his mother's prayers. Especially her last prayer for her little boy. Henry's mother prayed not alone for him, but for all the family, papa, brother and sister; but she named especially that which she prayed to God that Henry might be.

Photographed on Henry's mind are pictures of his parents which time can not efface; and he thinks that he will know them when he gets to the home in heaven. Here are in part word pictures of his parents. His father was a tall, erect man with black hair and beard. His eyes were brown. His shoulders were broad, and he presented a manly appearance. He was a manly man, a follower of Christ and a member of the

Christian church. In prayer he was noted as one who seemed to talk to God as friend with friend.

His mother was a beautiful type of Southern womanhood. Her complexion was fair, her face round. Her hair was black. Her form was graceful, and her words were gentle. Her eyes were blue, and at times seemed to swim in tears; liquid eyes that emitted expressions of love, joy and peace. Her lips were rosy, and ofttimes a slight flush was seen upon her cheeks. Sometimes her eyes showed that she had been weeping. But none saw her weep. She had been alone, talking with God. She had been praying. She told her Heavenly Father all about her sorrows and cast upon Jesus all her care. We shall learn, by and by, something of her prayer to God, and of His answer to her request. A part of the answer came long years afterwards, but it came.

She bore the burden of wifehood and mother without complaint, and when lingering disease and intense suffering came, she was still hopeful and trusted in the blessed Saviour's love. All that knew her loved her. She was a child of God, she loved her Saviour, and was a member of the Christian church. She would often take her children and tell them about Jesus and His love. She taught them how to pray, and read to them from God's Holy Book, the Bible. She taught

Henry how to sing his first Sabbath school hymn. At night-fall when the sun was set, and the stars came out, it was Mamma who tucked the children away in their little bed, after the good-night kisses had been given, and their little prayers had been said. In much tenderness and love would she do this, and then go about her work, occasionally humming some familiar hymn. Perhaps more than once the children may have seen a tear drop and felt its warmth upon their cheeks, as she bent over and kissed them good-night. But the tears were quickly brushed away and she said: "Now go to sleep." She was doubtless thinking about the children when other hands would put them to bed, and was wondering if they then would be loved. Would they be trained for Christ? Who would be mother when she was gone? She was beginning to realize that she could not be with them much longer. The children knew it not, and in their gleeful childhood, with frolic and joy, went to bed without pain, sorrow or tear. They knew mother was near. But no doubt if they could have awakened in the stillness and darkness of the night, save the firelight on the hearth, and lay quietly without speaking a word, and looked by their little bed, there they might have seen some one dressed in a white robe, bowed down upon the knees, the hands up to the face, the elbows resting upon their little bed. Long the bowed form lingered

in prayer. And could the children have heard the heart speaking with God, when all others of the household slept, they would have recognized Mamma praying to God to care for her little children when He should take her to live with Him in heaven. And through sorrow's dark cloud, and the rain of tears, God's beautiful rainbow of promise always appeared. She realized that God did hear and that He would answer her prayer. From her knees she would arise, brush back the tears, stand a moment looking down upon her sleeping little ones, and then turn her eyes heavenward and say, "Father, not my will, but Thine be done." God saw her, and heard her prayer.

CHAPTER IV.

MOTHER'S SICKNESS AND DEATH.

As time passed on, Henry's mother grew pale and thin, and often showed signs of extreme suffering, but not a word of complaint or murmur escaped her lips. Her heart was staid on God and she had sweet peace within. The rose in her cheeks began to fade and her eyes seemed to be sinking in her head. Her hands grew thin and bony. Her steps became slow and trembling. She suffered much. The physician came regularly. One day two or three doctors came. They examined her carefully and consulted together regarding her condition. They said that she had a spinal affection, but gave encouragement as to recovery.

Being young in years, Henry did not know what all this meant. And had not the Doctor said that his Mamma "must get well, and that she would be living at Christmas and weighing forty pounds more than she did then"? This was in the last days of June, and Christmas, the time when we hang up our stockings, was a long way off, to Henry. And then the Doctor had said that "Mamma would be well at Christmas." What a happy time that would be for Henry! His mother well, the rose in her cheeks, the hanging up of stockings on Christmas eve! Christ was born, you know, on Christmas day. What

joyous anticipations thrill the hearts of the little ones. But our brightest hopes are often blasted. It soon became apparent, to those old enough to understand, that Henry's mother was in very poor health, and that unless something could be done for her relief, she could not live long. The physicians came, but all their efforts to cure her proved futile. She grew rapidly worse.

One morning Henry came to his mother's room and noticed that she had been crying. He never knew the reason. But there were tears in her eyes and tears in her voice. He went close to her, but said not a word. He could not understand. His father looked sad. The conversation changed when Henry came in, and soon the tears disappeared.

It soon became apparent that the end was near. The physicians had done their best, but to no avail. Henry's mother grew pale and very weak. She could scarcely get up or move around. After awhile she was confined to her bed. During this time Henry would often stand by her bed, or sit thereon. He was devoted to his mother, and longed to see the day when she would be well again. Little did he dream that she would never more be well during her stay on earth.

Mother was not able to put him to bed now, but he could kneel by her bed and say the little prayer she had taught him:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

That is a beautiful prayer, and every little boy and girl ought to learn it. After his prayer had been said, he would climb upon the bed, kiss mother good-night, and then hurry off to bed and sleep till the morning light.

One morning when he got up he saw that his mother was not so well. Everything seemed so very quiet and sad. His father kept close to the room and much of the time close by the bed. That day Henry's grandmother, who lived some twenty-five miles away, came. Henry was delighted to see her, but she seemed so troubled. When Henry's father met her, they wept together. Henry's little aunt, just a little older than he, who came with his grandmother, ran on into the house and up to the bed, where his mother lay, and said, "Howdy, Sis Sue"—but not a word did his mother say, that was heard. Her eyes seemed to see some far-away object. Her breathing was quick and short. She was motionless save the hurried breath. She seemed not to notice the coming nor the going. She was dying, but her little children did not know it. Those present thought that she would never rally. But consciousness did return, and she revived sufficiently to talk a little. Friends and loved ones gathered about the bed. All seemed to feel that the end

was near. Henry's father took a seat upon the bed, and took the hand of his wife in his, and as he sat there, she said, something like this: "I can't be with you much longer. The end is near. I have thought for some time that I could not get well. The thought of leaving you and the children troubled me, and often I wept. But God has heard my prayer. He assures me that He will be with you, and that He will care for our children. Take good care of the children, and ever point them to Jesus. I want you and them to meet me in heaven. You have been a good husband. The Lord bless and keep you and our dear little ones, till we meet in heaven. It is well with my soul. I have no fear of death. Jesus is with me. I can be with you but a little while. I shall soon be with God. Blessed Jesus, how long!" In words broken by frequent sobs, Henry's father answered his wife as best he could. He assured her of his devoted love, and that he would care for the children, and point them to Jesus, and that by the grace of God he would meet her in the glory world, and that he would endeavor to bring the children with him. She trusted Jesus, and although the thought of leaving husband and little children gave her sorrow, yet she knew, "All is well." Jesus had spoken peace and there was peace. It was not long after this before Henry's mother fell asleep, and seemed to sleep well. It was her last night on

earth. When Henry went to bed that night, little did he dream that, before night came again, he would be a motherless little boy.

The morning dawned clear and bright, and Henry arose after a good night's sleep, almost without a sorrow. The sky was well nigh cloudless. The air was balmy. The flowers were in bloom and the birds were singing merrily. All nature appeared happy, and why not man? Henry caught the glad spirit of the morning. But when he went into his mother's room there was a death stillness. The hours passed silently by, as friends came and went, and each moment brought the end nearer and still nearer. He quit not the room, but stood by his mother's bed. What did it all mean? They told him after awhile that his mother was dying. A friend standing near the bed said to her, "Do you feel that all is well? Have you any fears in regard to your future condition?" She said, "All is well; all is well. I have no fears concerning the future, for I know that I shall be better off. It is true, that it is hard to leave my dear husband and little children, but the Lord in whom I trust will take care of them." While she thus calmly awaited the messenger, she requested her weeping friends to sing, but they were so much affected that none could sing. Her little son Henry, some nine or ten years old, feeling that his mother's dying request should be complied with, got his Sabbath

school music-book (for he was a Sabbath school scholar), and while he wept and sobbed as if his little heart would break, sang "Angels Join Our Song ." And while he sang his dying mother rejoiced in hope of a blissful immortality. An eye-witness of the scene says, "I can never forget this noble act of this obedient and devoted little boy." And there, as Henry's mother lay dying, she did as she had often done before, *prayed that Henry might preach the gospel.*

The end was now at hand. There was the quiet of the death chamber, the silence when you can hear one breathing: the noiseless tread, and the quiet hush that tells of an awful sorrow that all feel, but none dare mention. Henry's mother now lay motionless. She said not a word. The lines of suffering which intense pain had furrowed in her face disappeared. A joyful and peaceful smile reigned supreme. There was not a tear in her eyes, nor a tremor in her frame. Friends who stood by said, "She is almost gone. She is nearing the pearly gates of heaven. This is death." The angels came and bore her spirit to God, and it may be that the angels did join in song that day, when they came and carried Henry's mother from her earthly to her heavenly home. "She is dead," said sorrowing loved ones and friends as they turned sadly from the bed, their faces bathed in tears. The end of her earthly pilgrimage had come at last, and Henry

was a motherless boy. It was Tuesday, July 9, when she fell asleep, "blessed sleep, from which none ever wake to weep."

The day wore apace. The rosy morn bloomed into noonday brightness, and the noontide paled into evening gray, and after that the dark. The night revealed what Henry had scarcely realized during the day, that he was really a motherless child. That night he could not kneel by his mother's bed and say his little prayer. Mother was dead. She could not hear him, and yet may not our departed dead be ever near us and even hear us when we pray? She could not place her hand upon his head. It was cold in death. He could not kiss his mother good-night. Her lips were cold and motionless. His mother was sleeping the long, still sleep of death. He must go to bed that night without a mother's good-night kiss. Henry could not understand the full meaning of all this, for he was too young. Would he never see his mother again? Would she never speak to him any more? No, she could never speak to him again in human form and voice on earth, for she had gone to be with Jesus in heaven. In his deep sorrow and loss, Henry leaned hard upon his father and grandparents. They were godly, and loved him and his brother and sister dearly. But Henry missed his mother very much, and could hardly bear the thought of not seeing her on earth again. Following the

death of Henry's mother was the long drive of some twenty-five miles to the old family cemetery where she was laid to rest, and then those present turned sorrowingly away and went to their homes. It was night. And when it grew dark and the stars came out, Henry's thoughts turned more than ever to his mother in the cold and silent grave. But his mother had taught him to love God and to trust Him, and to pray; and so, as he knelt that night, not at mother's knee, but by his little bed, he prayed that God would take care of him and bless him. He went to bed and was soon fast asleep. God and angels kept watch till the darkness broke and the light dawned. The night passed and the morning came. It is ever thus with those who trust in God, and wait. God, who forgets not the little birds and the beautiful flowers, does not and will not forget little children. Jesus loves the children. When Jesus was on earth He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

Henry believed that Jesus loved little boys and girls, and is still very fond of that old hymn:

"I think, when I read
That sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How he called little children
As lambs to his fold,
I should like to have been with them then.

"I wish that his hands
Had been placed on my head,
That his arms had been thrown around me,
And that I might have seen
His kind look when he said,
'Let the little ones come unto me.'

"Yet still to his footstool
In prayer I may go,
And ask for a share in his love;
And if I thus earnestly
Seek him below,
I shall see him and hear him above.

"In that beautiful place
He has gone to prepare
For all who are washed and forgiven;
And many dear children
Are gathering there,
'For of such is the kingdom of heaven.'"

Henry was quite young—not yet ten—when his mother passed into the spirit world. His paternal grandparents now took his brother and sister with them, but Henry remained with his father for awhile at the home where his mother had died. It was very lonely there to him, and it did not seem like home since his mother was gone.

After the death of his mother it was not long before his father's health gave way, and he broke up housekeeping and moved to his parents to live. And there for a short time he lived with his parents and three little children. And this home became, in the providence of God, the home of the

three children bereaved of mother and soon to be fatherless.

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."

CHAPTER V.

FATHER'S ILLNESS AND DEATH.

Henry's father declined very rapidly in health, and no available medical skill checked the disease. He was a great sufferer, but Henry did not know that his father was so near death. He knew that he was sick, but Henry expected his father to get well. It was one morning in October, as I recall it, Henry was out with the farm hands about the barn, where they were shucking corn, when his grandfather came and told him that his father could not live. There were tears in his grandfather's voice, as he told Henry that he had better go to the house. Henry ran to the house, his little heart beating wildly on account of its deep and unexpected sorrow.

Henry's father was unable to speak when Henry reached his bedside. As Henry stood by the bed, his eyes filled with tears and his heart overflowed with sorrow. Some one near said, "He is almost gone," and then after awhile they said, "He is dead." This was a severe blow to Henry, as you will presently see. He did not believe that his father was going to die. He had prayed to God to spare his father, and surely God would answer prayer. Had not his mother taught him to pray to God, and that God would certainly hear and answer prayer? Had not his

father taught him the same glad truth? But father was dead. It was just a little over a year since his mother had died, and her death came vividly before his childish mind. His father had now joined his mother and little sister in the spirit land. The family was equally divided now—three in heaven and three on earth. And thus it remains as I write these lines. When the angel of death shall call one by one for the three that remain on earth, may they join the other members of that family in heaven. And mayest thou, too, dear reader, enter into the rest that remains for the people of God, when thy work on earth is done.

It was October 29, 1873, when Henry's father died. He had been a worthy member of the Christian church for fourteen years. He was a true soldier in the Southern army in the war between the States; and returned at its close to lead the life of a true soldier of the Cross of Christ. During his affliction he was patient and submissive. He died in great peace of mind, assuring his dear mother and family that all was well. The clergyman who conducted the funeral services said of him: "His wife preceded him to the grave. Three interesting children remain behind them in the hands of loving and true grandparents. A good man hath, we believe, entered upon that rest that remaineth for the people of God." Other kind words were said, but I have

told you enough to show that Henry's father trusted in Jesus for salvation. Henry thinks that he remembers something about the funeral services, and the clergyman who conducted them. He thinks that they sang the hymn of "The Dying Christian—All is Well":

"What's this that steals, that steals upon my frame?
Is it death? Is it death?
That soon will quench, will quench this vital flame!
Is it death? Is it death?
If this be death, I soon shall be
From every pain and sorrow free;
I shall the King of Glory see.
All is well; all is well."

"Weep not, my friends; my friends, weep not for me;
All is well; all is well.
My sins are pardoned, pardoned; I am free;
All is well, all is well.
There is not a cloud that doth arise,
To hide my Saviour from my eyes;
I soon shall mount the upper skies;
All is well, all is well.

"Tune, tune your harps, your harps, ye saints in glory;
All is well; all is well;
I will rehearse, rehearse the pleasing story,
All is well, all is well.
Bright angels have from glory come,
They're round my bed, they're in my room,
They wait to waft my spirit home.
All is well, all is well.

"Hark, hark! my Lord, my Lord and Master calls me;
All is well; all is well;
I soon shall see, shall see his face in glory;
All is well; all is well.

Farewell, dear friends, adieu, adieu!
I can no longer stay with you;
My glittering crown appears in view;
All is well; all is well.

"Hail, hail, all hail! all hail! ye blood-washed throng,
Saved by grace; saved by grace;
I come to join your rapturous song;
Saved by grace; saved by grace.
All, all is peace and joy divine,
All heaven and glory now are mine;
O, hallelujah to the Lamb;
All is well; all is well.

The funeral services over and a short drive of some two miles to the old family burying ground, and there by the side of his wife they placed him in the silent tomb. And there in the city of the dead, enclosed now with a barbed-wire fence and in part by a cedar hedge, side by side sleep husband and wife and child, with other relatives and friends, awaiting the coming of the morning—the glad resurrection morn, when Jesus shall come and the dead shall live again.

When the grave had been filled and the benediction pronounced, every one turned sadly away to their homes and there went up a prayer that God would bless and care for the three little orphan children. They were poor. They had nothing but the noble heritage of Christian parentage and training.

They were orphan children. But God who does not forsake the righteous, nor allow their seed to beg bread, provided for Henry, his brother

and his sister a good home, food and shelter. He provided for them all the needed blessings of this life. Their paternal grandparents became father and mother. Their home became the home of the three orphan children, and never were greater love and care bestowed upon grandchildren. There were some people who advised Henry's grandparents to send the children to the orphanage. But these noble-hearted Christian grandparents said, "No, they are our children, and we will care for them." And they did.

But the fact remained that Henry was an orphan, though he suffered not the need for parents and the blessings they could give. Yet there is a feeling of loneliness and of sadness in an orphan's breast which none can ever know but those who have experienced it. Henry's heart, since the death of his parents, has been peculiarly tender towards those who have lost their parents, and more than once since he became a man has he ministered to the needs of orphan children.

In the deep, dark night of sorrow through which Henry was passing, the blessed Father of life, light and love abode with him, though Henry often felt not the Divine presence nor understood the mysterious workings of Providence. But now since he has grown older and wiser, and as he looks back upon the past, he thanks God for His abiding presence, and as he looks forward he prays, "Lord, 'Abide with me.'"

"Abide with me; fast falls the even-tide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

"Swift to its close, ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou, who changest not, abide with me.

"I need thy presence every passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Thro' cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

"I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness,
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

"Hold thou thy Cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me."

CHAPTER VI.

WHY WAS FATHER NOT SPARED?

Henry loved his parents, and the thought puzzled his mind as to why his father was not spared, especially since his mother had been taken only a little more than a year before.

That child-like trust, manifested in the death of his mother, had partly given way to a questioning spirit within, as to the Why. He had been taught that God would hear prayer, and that He would answer us when we pray. Yet he had prayed that his father might get well, and he had died. Was this God's answer to his prayer? His little heart grew strangely cold under such thoughts, and he was greatly troubled. His mother had told him that God heard and answered prayer. But his mother was dead, and so he could not talk to her about his troubles. His father had taught him the same truth, that God heard and answered prayer. Henry had studied the Bible with his father as Sabbath school teacher, and he had early learned to love and adore God. He had implicit confidence in God, and he believed what his father and mother had told him about God. But father and mother were both dead, and Henry felt that God had not heard his prayers asking that his father might get well. Henry did not understand that God

hears us not, as we ask, when we ask amiss, and that oftentimes God answers us not as we ask, but sends that which is best. Had Henry's father lived, he would have been absent from his loved dead. In the arms of death, husband and wife, father and mother, were once again with each other. Henry's father, humanly speaking, had an incurable disease, and God took him to live in heaven, and thus forever cured him of all sickness and pain. For in the Christian's home in glory, no pain, nor sickness, nor death can enter. When we pray we must seek to know the Divine will. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom. 8: 26-28. And so Henry's prayer in the true and real sense was not unanswered. The answer was not what he expected, but who can say that the answer was not the very best answer that could have been given? We may not know the why of this or that now, but sometime and somewhere we shall understand.

"Unanswered yet, the prayer your lips have pleaded
In agony of heart these many years?
Does faith begin to fail? is hope departing?
And think you all in vain those falling tears?
Say not the Father hath not heard your prayers—
You shall have your desires
Sometime, somewhere.

"Unanswered yet? though when you first presented
This one petition at a Father's throne,
It seemed that you could not wait the time of asking,
So urgent was your heart to make it known.
Though years have passed since then, do not despair;
The Lord will answer you
Sometime, somewhere.

"Unanswered yet? Nay, do not say ungranted,
Perhaps your part is not yet wholly done;
The work begun when first your prayer was uttered,
And God will finish what he has begun;
If you will keep the incense burning there,
His glory you shall see
Sometime, somewhere.

"Unanswered yet? Faith cannot be unanswered,
Her feet are firmly planted on the Rock;
Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted,
Nor quails before the loudest thunder shock;
She knows omnipotence has heard her prayer,
And cries, "It shall be done"
Sometime, somewhere."

Henry was young, and had not at this time learned the secret of prevailing prayer, which is, "Not my will, Father, but Thine be done." He thought not of the fact that an answer to a request may be positive or negative. That the request may be granted or refused. God heard

Henry's prayer. He said, No, and Henry's father did not get well. But Henry thought at that time that God would say Yes, and that his father would get well.

If we go to our earthly parents and ask them for something, they hear us. They listen to what we have to say. They hear our request, and then they answer as they think or may know to be best. Sometimes they say yes, and we get just what we asked for. At other times they say no, and then we get that which in the minds of our parents is best for us to have. No from our parents does not always mean that we are unheard. It means that what we ask is not for our good, and that they have something else in mind far better for us. But the refusal from fond and devoted parents is no less an answer to their children than the granting of their request. God delights to give or grant that which we ask when the petition is according to His divine and righteous will. He is too good, kind and wise, and loves us too much, to give or grant us that which is not best. Our prayers are answered, but they may not be answered in every instance as we at the time may wish. God hears and answers as He sees best.

"He does not disregard the orphan's cry,
But none may dictate when His servants die."

God gave to Henry kind grand-parents who loved him, his brother and little sister. These

grand-parents cared for and loved these three orphan children as they did their own. No parents could have been better or more kind. In after life Henry learned of true and prevailing prayer, and he knew of a truth from experience that God hears and answers the prayer of faith, and that God heard his dying mother's prayer for him; and although God did not see fit, in His love and wisdom, to grant the request asking that his father might get well, yet he thoroughly believes that God did hear that prayer, and sent to him—not that which he asked—but that which was best.

As to why his father was not spared, Henry does not bother about that now. He leaves that with God, and though he may never know the Divine reason, this side of heaven, he can and does trustingly say from his heart, "All is well, all is well." And this is his earnest life's prayer to God, to help him at all times to say in truth, "Father, 'Thy will be done.'"

"My God and Father, while I stray
Far from my home, on life's rough way,
Oh, teach me from my heart to say,
'Thy will be done.'

"What tho' in lonely grief I sigh
For friends beloved, no longer nigh,
Submissive still would I reply,
'Thy will be done.'

"Let but my fainting heart be blest
With Thy sweet Spirit for its guest
My God to Thee I leave the rest,
'Thy will be done.'

"Renew my will from day to day;
Blend it with Thine; and take away
All now that makes it hard to say,
'Thy will be done.'

"Then when on earth I breathe no more
The prayer oft mixed with tears before,
I'll sing upon a happier shore,
'Thy will be done.'"

CHAPTER VII.

THE CALL TO PREACH.

The darkness deepens, but out of the dark and terrible night, there comes a voice, "Lead, kindly light." And the Lord did lead him.

"Lead, kindly light, amid th' encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I ask not to see
The distant scene, one step enough for me.

"I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Should'st lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on.
I loved the garish day; and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will; remember not past years.

"So long thy pow'r has blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on
Thro' dreary doubt, thro' pain and sorrow, till
The night is gone.
And with the morning, those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."

Henry's father and mother were dead and he was an orphan. But God did not forsake him nor his brother and sister. They all lived together with their grand-parents, and grew up to manhood and womanhood. They were respected and loved by all who knew them. During the

summer months Henry helped on the farm, and a part of the winter months he attended school, and in this way he obtained a good common school education. He attended Sabbath school and was very fond of Bible study. At about the age of twelve years, Henry confessed Christ in the forgiveness of his sins, and joined the Christian Church.

Henry had felt for some time that he must preach the gospel, and had felt that way even before he came to Christ in public profession, and joined church. It was one of his childish recollections, "I am going to preach." And now there seemed to be no escape from the thought, after his conversion and profession of Christ. In his work the thought pressed itself upon him and it made him very unhappy—that thought, together with the fact that he felt he was not living as a Christian should live.

His grand-parents were getting old, and he reasoned thus: as they cared for him in childhood, that he ought to care for them in their old age. And then the out-look to make money, by remaining with his grand-parents, was good, and he did not want to lose it. The management of the farm was fast passing into Henry's hands as he grew up, and his grandparents grew older.

Thus the struggle went on some five years, during which time Henry was sorely tempted and tried. We pass over much of this part of his

life. He was prompt and dutiful in the discharge of his duties to his grand-parents. He loved them dearly. He studied hard, often at night, after a long, hard day's work on the farm. He was especially fond of good books.

During this time there is one experience which we will not pass over in silence. It is this; he at one time was almost led to conclude that he had committed the unpardonable sin. That impression gave him a great deal of trouble. One can not imagine the deep concern of mind and anguish of heart it gave Henry, unless one has passed through some such experience. Language cannot express the depth and mysterious feelings of a soul wading in such darkness, longing for the coming of the light, and yet fearing that it has passed beyond the pale of Christ's love and salvation.

It was a lonely, mysterious, indescribable night, thus to feel.

At one time he asked a deacon of his church to have his name erased from the church record. He told the deacon that he did not feel worthy to belong to the church. That godly man knowing him well, advised him to wait, and gave to him other wholesome advice, for which Henry feels grateful to this day. He decided to stay in the church and has never wanted his name erased since. Who can tell but that his sainted mother's prayers uttered in his early life, and

when she lay dying, were, all unknown to him, the mysterious hand that touched the balances, and caused him to decide for Christ and the church? But still Henry was not at peace. He was in great distress of mind, and he would often open the Bible and read at random, hoping to find some word of hope or some token there to dispel the awful gloom.

He would go into the deep wood, and there by a tall, stately pine, kneel, take off his hat, and imploringly look up to God for some hope, some light, some comfort. But the distress of mind remained, and the darkness was still about him. And he asked once again, "Will God not hear prayer?" and as the answer seemed long delayed, his heart grew strangely sad, and he began to think his doom was sealed; that he had sinned against the Holy Ghost; that he was lost, forever lost. He knew that he had not lived as pure a life as he ought, and that he had not obeyed the call to preach the gospel. But he was poor, his grand-parents old, and they had done so much for him that he felt under obligations to remain with them; and besides he did not want to ask them to help him any more. He was not prepared to preach the gospel, and he saw no way to ever prepare for so great and high a calling. Yet he felt, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." Oh! for mother, that he might tell her all. But the grave spoke not a word. He

told not his grand-parents of his distress, and hardly spoke of the feeling that he ought to preach the gospel.

His distress of mind increased, light did not come, and thus for some time he groped in the dark. The burden grew heavier than he could bear, and so at last he decided that he was going to serve God to the best of his ability and that if God saved him it was all right, and if he was lost, he could be but lost. He was in the hands of God his Father. Let Him do as seemeth best. Henry had not another word to say. He cast his burden on Jesus. He trusted God to hear and to answer prayer. He also decided, God helping him, to enter the ministry, and to preach the gospel. He asked God to protect him. The tempter now left him for awhile, but has often come back; but not with such power as he did once. God hath never allowed the enemy of souls to tempt Henry as he was tempted in those dark days when he felt that he had sinned against the Holy Ghost, and that he was forever lost. God does hear and answer prayer. Henry now made known, to his grand-parents, his desire to preach the gospel, and though they said that they would miss him greatly, they readily consented for him to enter college and prepare for the gospel ministry.

He was now a young man of about eighteen years of age. He possessed a good common-school

education. But how to acquire collegiate education and fit himself for the gospel ministry he did not know. He asked God to help him, and that if it was really God's will for him to preach to open up the way by which he might prepare himself for preaching. Since that time the way has ever opened, and Henry has ever desired to follow as God leads him. He was desirous of paying his own way in school as far as possible. His grand-parents felt that, in their old age, and with many demands upon them, they could not aid him very much. But be it known that they were willing to aid him, and did all they could for him as long as they lived. Henry taught school first and made money to enter college. The time for home leaving came at last. It was the last of August in the year 1882. The trunk was packed, and in it grand-mother had put all of the necessary things. There were clothes, some of her own weaving and making, socks that she had knit, handkerchiefs, collars, cuffs and many other things which Henry would never have thought of. There were even a needle, a spool of thread, and some buttons. That godly and ever careful grand-mother seemed to have anticipated almost every need of her motherless boy.

Henry's grand-father was to take him to the railway station. Good-bye was said to grand-mother, brother, sister, and aunt, and the heart

pangs of that home-leaving can never be told. Henry was leaving home with heavenly benedictions resting upon him, but he felt the pangs of parting all the more because of the love that bound them all together. He might never see them again. It was a sad hour to them all. His grandmother, a tall but slender woman, her hair silvered over, her sight a little dim, stood in the doorway and watched Henry as far as she could see him, and by her side stood his brother and sister, hardly old enough to know the full meaning of such a parting. She was a good woman, and as she lost sight of him, when the buggy turned behind the dark pines, she breathed the oft repeated prayer: "God bless and keep my boy." And God did bless and keep that boy.

Henry's grand-father talked earnestly and tenderly to him on the way to the station. Sometimes his heart would grow too full for utterance, and then there was a painful silence, while tears rolled over Henry's round face; and now and then one stole down the furrowed cheeks of his grand-father.

Yet there was joy in all this because they felt that they were doing God's will. His grandfather's words were full of good advice, loving counsel, and his manly heart ever yearned for Henry's welfare and success.

The seven miles to the railway station were all passed too quickly for Henry. He wanted

to stay with his grand-parents and the loved ones at home, but no; duty called him onward, and he dared not disobey the Master's call, "Go preach the gospel." The train was heard in the distance, the ticket had been purchased, the trunk checked, and by the side of the railroad track was seen an aged man strongly built, but slightly bent with the weight of many years and life's heavy burdens. His hair was white, his face somewhat furrowed, and his hands a little wrinkled, his eyes bright, yet a little dimmed by age. A manly man was he, an aged, righteous man. By his side stood a tremulous youth, inexperienced with the ways of the world, yet a lad who had faith in God and a noble sense of duty. His face was more round than long, his hair was black. His eyes were blue. His complexion was fair. His shoulders a little stooped. There the two stood facing each other—the aged grandfather and the young grandson—talking fondly together. The train came. It stopped but a moment, and the aged man extended his hand to the somewhat shrinking form of the young man, and said, "Good-bye, son; God bless and keep you. Get on now." And Henry, hardly able to speak, said through his almost blinding tears, "Good-bye, Pa." And the train sped on and left the aged man standing by the track all alone, and Henry, too, was all alone amidst the people of that crowded car, for he knew no one,

and his heart was not there. He was thinking of home and the loved ones there.

The train passed quickly out of sight and Henry's grandfather turned homeward, and as he did so, must have thought of what he had said to Henry on the way. "I shall miss you most of all, but I will get on." He, too, was lonely. His loneliness was that of an aged father whose son is just going out to battle in the world—to success or to failure. Night came on, and Henry was met at the railway station over a hundred miles west from where he had that day boarded the train, and was taken to his boarding place. There was only one face there that he had ever seen before, and that was the face of the clergyman who had conducted his father's funeral services. It was lonely to Henry, and often did he long for home and the loved ones there. He entered school and was soon hard at work. And we need not here relate his school experiences. He got on well and made good progress in his studies.

He wrote home regularly, and always welcomed the letters therefrom, which came bringing him kind remembrances from those who loved him. He was not forgotten. Once Henry received a letter from one of his uncles in which were the following lines: "Pa was down a few weeks ago and spent nearly three days. I formed the same opinion of yourself, in regard

to his appearance, and feel sad to look on him and know that he must soon follow. I have not seen him since he was here. I am going up next week. Don't you fail to write home, for I assure you just a few lines often will be appreciated, for whenever I go there 'Henry' seems to be first in Pa's mind. He is devoted to you, and if it will not make you vain, allow me to say he is proud of you and your prospects. So write to me when you can, but again, don't fail to write home often." Good advice this, not only for Henry, but for every young man and woman away from home. The letters which Henry received from his grandfather always breathed an earnest prayer at their close for his welfare. One that is before me as I write closes thus, "May the good Lord bless you in all your efforts to do good for the souls of men." That letter is a real treasure to Henry.

At the expiration of five months, Henry's money had been spent, and he had nothing with which to pay board and tuition and other expenses. He would not let his people at home know it. Henry did not want them to know to what financial straits he was often reduced. He had entered school for ten months, and he had determined to remain if possible. Expenses had been greater than he had expected, and so notwithstanding his rigid economy his money had given out when the school year was only half

ended. What was to be done he did not know. It was Christmas time. He wanted to remain in school, but did not know how to do so. He had spent most of his Christmas holidays at work on his first sermon. Henry felt that he must be busy, though other boys, some of them his class-mates, were enjoying their holidays with their companions, or were at home with their loved ones. Henry felt that he could not spare the money nor the time to go home, as much as he longed to do so. The day was drawing near for school to open, and no way that he saw was opening for him to remain in school, without incurring a heavy debt. He did not feel justified in doing that, even if he could arrange to stay in school that way.

It was December, the twenty-seventh, 1882, when he received the following letter, which will explain itself:

"Dear Bro.:—Brother .... has decided to board you. You can go up at once. I will show you the correspondence between Bro. H. and myself when you come up. Also explain everything to you fully. Your pious and prudent walk has impressed Bro. and Sister H—— very favorably. Now that they have come to my aid and your aid in boarding you free for a few months I trust and believe that you will continue to show yourself a man worthy of such favors. It is true that you are an orphan, but the Lord has taken you up, by blessing you with kind friends.

Your humble teacher,

....."

You will observe that I have omitted names, but this letter was signed by the president of the institution, and the friends alluded to in this letter were comparative strangers to Henry. I know not that Henry had ever been at their home before he went there to board.

Henry had been boarding out in the country with the clergyman who had conducted his father's funeral, and who had served as pastor of the church where Henry held his membership. Henry was very fond of this clergyman, and will hold him in kind remembrance while life lasts. He was a friend to Henry and to Henry's father. It was some two miles from the home of this clergyman, where Henry boarded, to the college building, and the kind offer to give him his board came from a merchant and his wife who lived in town close to the college. Henry went to their home at the opening of the New Year's session, 1883, and became very much as one of the boys. Kinder friends he never had. They were much like father and mother to him. Indeed, it became for several years his home; and when he had grown to manhood and had charge of church work, it was to the home of these true and warm friends that he took his bride to board until they went to housekeeping. Henry's old home had been broken up some years before by the death of his grandparents. God had given to Henry friends. The way was opening, and his mother's

prayers were being answered. Henry can never forget these dear friends, and he ever prays God's richest blessings to rest upon them.

Notwithstanding the aid of grandparents and friends, after all it was a hard struggle financially to keep in school, and the way often seemed dark, but God's promises have never failed. God has always opened up the way as Henry has gone forward in obedience to Him. God has been very good and gracious to him, and Henry rejoices and often sings:

"Oh, happy day that fixed my choice
On thee my Saviour, and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus wash'd my sins away!

He taught me how to watch and pray
And live rejoicing every day;
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away."

In the fall of the year, November 19, 1882, the conference of which Henry was a member licensed him to preach, and in the early part of the next year he preached his first sermon. This was about ten years and a half after his mother's death.

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS FIRST SERMON.

The day was cold and the ground was covered with snow. It was January, 1883. They had driven some ten miles. The president of the institution and a son of the friends with whom Henry boarded went with him to the church. It was out in the country, and the day being very cold, the congregation was very small. There were perhaps twelve or fifteen persons present. The hour for preaching arrived, and Henry went up into the pulpit and took for his text, Romans 11: 22, "Behold therefore the goodness and the severity of God." And I shall now give you that sermon. I find it in writing. I find the following hymns marked on the front page of that now faded manuscript, and as the numbers go in the old Christian Hymn-Book, the hymns are as follows—194:

> "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
> Uttered or unexpressed;
> The motion of a hidden fire
> That trembles in the breast."

Rather significant that Henry should have selected a hymn on prayer to be used in connection with his first sermon. That day his mother's prayer was being answered, but he did not know it. The other hymns are 450, "I love Thy kingdom, Lord!" and 564,

"Jesus and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of thee?"

and 224, "Jesus lover of my soul."

These are all good hymns, and deeply spiritual. I find written on the margin of the first page of the manuscript these words: "This the first sermon I ever preached."

THE SERMON.

"Behold therefore the goodness and the severity of God." Rom. 11: 22.

"In this chapter from which these words are taken, the Apostle invites the attention of the Gentiles to the rejection of the Jews; and every Bible reader knows that the Jews were God's chosen people, and when they were rejected because of unbelief, and other branches grafted in, which bore no fruit, and made fruitful by faith; well may the Apostle call attention to the 'goodness and the severity' of God, and caution the Gentiles that they be 'not high-minded.' 'For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee.' Wise and mysterious are the workings of God. For often did He seem severe in His dealings with mankind, when we look at His dealings with a natural eye and judge accordingly. Yet with the eye of faith, with trust and child-like confidence, we get a glimpse of heavenly light, and see His wondrous works as they are—pure, perfect, right, and altogether just, though severe they may seem. Yet

'behind a frowning providence He hides His smiling face.' The Apostle Paul, the writer of these words, was no stranger to the 'goodness and the severity of God.' For in his own conversion he had felt the goodness of God in saving him from eternal misery and woe. Many were the trials, temptations, and afflictions of this noble Christian hero who lived in time of persecution of Christians, and died a martyr for the Christian faith. Justly might he exclaim, 'Behold therefore the goodness and the severity of God.' Let us now by our Bibles visit the inhabitants of ancient days, the Antediluvians, and there notice the workings of God, His goodness in preparing a way of deliverance for the obedient. Noah, a righteous man, 'being warned of God moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house.' Thus he was a preacher of righteousness over one hundred years before the flood that destroyed the wicked and rebellious of mankind. Oh! how severe do the dealings of God appear upon them who harden their hearts and will not hear. For 'he that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.' I doubt not but that the inhabitants of that day thought only of their pleasure and happiness here, and concerning the warning which Noah gave, thought it was time enough yet to prepare to meet God, like many of our own people in

this day and time plead time enough yet. But suddenly the rain began to pour down in torrents. Noah is then safe in the ark: the water continues to rise higher and higher, until the inhabitants are forced to leave their dwellings and seek safety on some hill or mountain to escape the raging waters, and yet they are not safe. They would not obey God, and safety now they will never find. It is too late! too late! The doors of mercy are forever closed, and they must share the dreadful fate of all who will not hear and accept mercy's invitation while it is lovingly extended to all. Up the mountain sides the waters gradually ascend—the clouds continue to darken, the thunder bursting forth from the concave of heaven fills the inhabitants with fear and wonder, while the lightning, flashing in majestic grandeur across the canopy of the heavens, declares the power of God and His severity to those who would not hearken to His call. On yonder mountain or hill may have been seen people crying for help, while at their feet the lashing billows meet, until a fearful wave sweeps them off and all is silent. 'Thus the wicked perish without hope.' But look at Noah safe in his ark while it floats in grandeur over the waters of the flood. Thus the righteous are saved. Blessed thought, that God never forsakes His children, but in working out their salvation, those that reject Him are lost, while those that receive Him are saved.

"Next, notice the Israelites. When they would obey, how peaceful they were. Look at them as they rise gradually and become a great nation. How in peace, joy, and prosperity they lived while obedient to God. But on the other hand, how in captivity they did groan after disobeying their Lord and Master; but notice the goodness of God in permitting them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall, the temple, and to inhabit their own beloved land again. But when Christ came they rejected and would not receive Him as the promised Redeemer. 'And since the overthrow of their government, and the final destruction of their city they have been set up on high as a visible, incontrovertible and overwhelming evidence of the truth and faithfulness of Jehovah.' Josephus, in speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, states that the lanes were obstructed and that the city ran with blood from the slain. Titus, the Roman general, is said to have exclaimed, 'We have certainly had God for our assistant in this war.' Thus we notice that as long as the Jews were the objects of God's regard, no weapon formed against them could prosper; but when they became the objects of His displeasure, on account of their sins, no plan or effort succeeded, or will succeed, until the set time to favor them shall come. If we would enjoy the goodness of God we must work in his vineyard, for there are no idlers in the work of

the Master; every one has something to do, both small and great find employment in the work of saving souls. Then, beloved, let us put on the whole 'armor of God' and fight manfully for the cause of Christ and never the battle give over till the victory is won. Though the enemy of souls may assault you in a furious manner; yet look to our Captain, who through suffering was made perfect. Then trust Him, and remember that 'He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.' If thy heart grows weary and faint, think of Him who left the shining courts of glory and came to earth to save all mankind that would accept Him as the Saviour, the Redeemer, and the Son of God. See Him as He suffers and dies an ignominious death on the cross to pay the debt of sinners and redeem a lost race. Behold therefore the goodness of God in sending His Son to ransom sinners. Listen at His gracious and loving invitation, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

"Who that would come and believe on Christ has not found rest when heavy laden with sin and transgression, and, being desirous of forsaking their evil ways, embrace the blessed religion of our Lord and Master? How often has the sin-sick soul found relief in the promises of God. Behold, then, the goodness of God in receiving you after you have wandered far in the forbidden

paths of sin and transgression. Beloved Christian, press onward and upward, and a crown you shall wear bye and bye, if faithful unto the end. Take fresh courage, and remember you have One making intercession for you. Labor on: you will reap when the last battle of life is fought unless you prove false. If through temptation you fall, arise with energy renewed to fight more manfully than before. For if 'any man sin we have an advocate, Jesus Christ, the righteous.' Heaven, beloved Christians, is the home of the pure in heart; and in the goodness of God, Christ has gone to prepare a place for you and for me, for all Christians, and He will come again to receive His children home. Happy thought! when life's work is ended here below, we have a house above, where 'the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest.' But on the other hand, look and see what will be the end of those who will not accept the gracious invitation. Their home will be quite different from the Christian's. The Christian's is in heaven with the pure, and the blest, where angels sing the songs of the Saviour's praise. But where will thy home be, my unconverted friends? I ask as one that loves your soul, and would beg you to escape that place of misery and woe. Listen at the Saviour's words when He says: 'The angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be

wailing and gnashing of teeth.' Then will the righteous shine, as the prophet Daniel says, 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.' How I long for the joys of that beauteous land where from sorrow and sin and death I shall be free! Where I can see the One that died and behold Him as He is, His hands, His side, His head that wore a crown of thorns. Blessed Jesus, we shall see bye and bye. Behold therefore the goodness and the severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shall be cut off."

The sermon ended, and after the benediction had been pronounced, they drove to a home near the church and got dinner, and that afternoon drove back to their home.

Henry did not know it then, nor for some time afterwards, but that day his mother's prayer, offered when she was dying, was answered. It seemed hard to him once that God should permit his parents to be taken by death, and that he was left an orphan; but now since he knoweth that God doeth all things well, that which he can not understand he accepts with faith. He knoweth that God, the Father, is too good and wise, and that He loves His children too well to be unkind. He thanks God for calling him into the gospel ministry, and for opening up the way, and ever prays God to keep him faithful to the trust bestowed.

From this time on Henry was almost constantly engaged in preaching. He took church work and continued his studies in school. In 1883, he completed the normal course in the college which he was attending, at the head of his class. He had been pursuing higher branches in the school all this time, a course leading to the degree of Master of Arts. This course he continued for some time in connection with his church and pastoral labors. One year he won a Latin and an orator's medal in a hard-fought contest. There were four medals offered—Latin, music, mathematics and orator's. He tried to win two, the Latin and the orator's, and he won them. It was a sharp contest, and you may judge of his great joy when he won. Yet there was nothing of a boastful spirit in him, nor in his manner. He was truly thankful that he had won, but you rarely ever heard him mention the fact, and he has seldom ever worn them. Yet he prizes them very highly. God was blessing and caring for Henry, and his dying mother's prayer was being answered. Henry may never know in this life why God led him this way or that; but with a firm faith in God, and believing that God hears and answers prayer, he could say, as God led him on:

"So I go on, not knowing,
I would not if I might,
I had rather walk in the dark with God,
Than go alone in the light;
I had rather walk by faith with him,
Than go alone by sight."

CHAPTER IX.

MOTHER'S PRAYER ANSWERED.

"God never forgets."

"Mountains and stars may sink and decay;
God never forgets;
Time, with its restless wing onward may flee,
Measuring cycles on cycles to be,
Till he dips his gray plume in eternity's sea,
God never forgets.

"Youth, with its rising hopes painting the sky,
God never forgets;
May unfurl its bright pinions, bleeding and torn,
Crushed to the earth by humanity's scorn,
And die like a star at the rising of the morn,
God never forgets.

"Old age, with its silver hairs covered with years,
God never forgets;
In the valley of sorrows may pillow its head,
And weep o'er the dying and mourn for the dead,
And drop from life's stage like a tear that is shed,
God never forgets."

After Henry had been preaching for about a year, in connection with his school work, he took church work in an adjoining State, and there continued his studies in an institution of learning convenient to his churches. He was not ordained as yet, and a kind-hearted brother minister conducted such church ordinances as required an ordained clergyman. This clergyman was especially kind to him in many ways, and more than once let him have money when he was in need—

all of which Henry was very careful to pay back. But doubtless Henry can never repay this minister for his kindness. It was a kindness shown without expectation of return in a human sense. The Lord will repay, if not in time, then in eternity.

Up to this time Henry knew little about the circumstances connected with his mother's death. His heart was very tender, and often he was so quiet, and seemed so sad, that the death of his parents was rarely mentioned in his presence. And thus he grew to manhood, asking scarcely anything about their death, and hearing but little.

At one of his appointments in the adjoining State to which he had gone, something was said, by the friends with whom he was stopping one night, about his mother's death. Henry knew but little about the incidents of his mother's last illness. A young lady, a daughter of a deceased minister of the denomination to which Henry belonged, an orphan herself, was present. She was a member of the congregation that Henry was then serving. She told him that she had seen a notice of his mother's death, and that she would procure it for him. She did so, and here is the notice—a newspaper clipping—which she handed to him some time after. I omit the names where blanks occur.

OBITUARY.

"Departed this life on Tuesday, July 9th, ..., wife of ....., of Granville county, N. C., where by her lovely character, and amiable disposition, and attractive manners she won and enjoyed the affection of numerous friends, while her uniform kindness of heart secured the esteem of all who knew her. She was from early life a consistent member of the Christian church at ....., Warren county, N. C. Her case was one of protracted suffering, which she bore with Christian fortitude and resignation. It was the privilege of the writer to visit her a short time before she died, and in answer to the interrogation, 'Do you feel that all is well? Have you any fears in regard to your future condition?'' said she, 'All is well; all is well. I have no fears concerning the future, for I know that I shall be better off. It is true 'tis hard to leave my dear husband and little children, but the Lord, in whom I trust, will take care of them.' While she thus calmly awaited the messenger, she requested her weeping friends to sing, but they were so much affected, none could sing; but her little son Henry, some nine or ten years old, determined that his mother's dying request should be complied with and got his Sabbath-school music book (for he was a Sabbath-school scholar) and while he wept and sobbed as if his little heart would break, sang, "Angels join our song." And while he sang, his dying mother rejoiced in hope of a blissful immortality. I can never forget this noble act of this obedient and devoted little boy. May he, with his little brother and sister, live so as to meet their mother in heaven, where there will be no more parting; and may husband and children be enabled to say—

Dearest wife-mother—thou hast left us,
Here thy loss we deeply feel,
But 'tis God that hath bereft us,
He can all our sorrows heal."

Henderson, N. C. C. J. H. W. H."

This was all new and strange to Henry. That part of his mother's obituary relating to him he did not remember. If he had ever seen before a notice of his mother's death, it had passed out of his mind. He very thankfully received this bit of newspaper clipping which contained the notice of his mother's death, and carefully placed it in safe keeping.

In November, 1886, Henry, having proved his gifts as a licentiate, and having been recommended by the churches to which he had ministered, and having passed a satisfactory examination as required by the denomination to which he belonged, was duly set apart and ordained to the office of an Elder, by prayer and the imposition of hands, and was authorized to administer the ordinances of the church and solemnize the rite of matrimony.

He was now a full-fledged gospel minister so far as the rules and regulations of the church of his choice were concerned. He continued his studies as opportunity afforded. From this time on he had charge of regular church work most of the time, but often taught school or went to school in connection with his church work. He was determined to thoroughly equip himself for the work of his Lord and Master, Jesus the Christ. His health was not very good, and often had he been warned in regard to taking care of himself, and advised not to study too hard. Af-

ter continuing his studies for some time in this way, the demand for church workers in the field being so great, and not having the means with which to further pursue his course of study, and besides it was evident that his health was giving way, he gave up school work, and entered fully into the work of preacher and pastor, devoting his entire time to the work of the church. And thus ten years had almost passed away since Henry received the obituary on his mother's death, and he had heard nothing more concerning the incidents connected with her death. He had spent but little time in the neighborhood of his old home. His church work was some distance from the home of his childhood, and a part of the time it was in another State. His school days were now over, and he was an ordained clergyman, engaged in preaching the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In the meantime his grandmother had passed over the river of death and entered into the beautiful home of the soul. Henry remembers full well once when he preached at the old home church from the text, "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," how his grandmother did rejoice as he pictured Jesus seeking the lost as a good shepherd; and the joy of heaven and earth, and of the saved themselves, when the lost were found and saved by Jesus. Years before Jesus had found Henry's grandmother and she had ac-

cepted Christ in the forgiveness of sin. She found Christ her Saviour, and He saved her; and so when death came to her, in her old age, she fell asleep, and Jesus took her to live with Him.

It was not long before Henry's grandfather passed from earth and joined his wife in the spirit land. He was a good man, a deacon in his church, faithful to God and to his neighbors. He nearly always closed his letters to Henry with these words, "May the good Lord bless you in all of your efforts to do good for the souls of men," or else in these words, "May the good Lord bless you, is the prayer of your father." He went out about the barn lot one morning to look after some work, and while there he had a stroke of paralysis, and after lingering for four days, passed peacefully from his home on earth to his home in heaven. Henry when a child used to hear him in the pensive evening hour sing that beautiful hymn:

"My heavenly home is bright and fair,
No pain nor death can enter there;
Its glittering towers the sun outshine;
That heavenly mansion shall be mine.

"My Father's house is built on high,
Far, far above the starry sky;
When from this earthly prison free,
That heavenly mansion mine shall be.

"Let others seek a home below,
Which flames devour, or waves o'erflow;
Be mine the happier lot—to own
A heavenly mansion near the throne.

"Then fail this earth, let stars decline,
And sun and moon refuse to shine
All nature sink and cease to be;
That heavenly mansion stands for me."

It was ten o'clock Sunday night when they said "He is dead." But we knew that he had fallen asleep in Jesus. He was seventy-nine years old, and served his day and generation well. He was an epistle, known and read of all men with whom he had associated. That very Sabbath Henry preached the gospel of the Christ his grandfather loved so well, and when the sermon was over he hastened to the bedside of his dying grandfather. On Tuesday afternoon, August 16, 1887, in the presence of a vast concourse of people, his body was placed in the lap of mother earth, and there in the church cemetery by the side of his wife it sleeps awaiting the coming of his Lord.

Though a man, Henry felt very keenly the death of his grandparents. They had become his father and mother in deed and truth, after the death of his own parents. Henry never knew his maternal grandfather. He died when Henry was a little boy. He has been told that he was a follower of Christ. He remembers well his

maternal grandmother. She was a very sweet-spirited Christian. When a lad, Henry delighted in going to see her. She was always so glad to see him, his brother and sister. She was one of God's precious saints on earth. But at the time of which I write she, too, had gone to join the redeemed in heaven. Thus in a brief period of about fifteen years, Henry had lost by death his parents and three of his grandparents. He felt the blow by death to be a hard one, but he had "Faith in Divine Goodness," and could say:

"He sendeth sun, He sendeth shower,
Alike they're needful to the flower.
And joys and tears alike are sent
To give the soul fit nourishment.
As comes to me or cloud or sun,
Father, Thy will, not mine, be done.

"Can loving children e'er reprove
With murmurs whom they trust and love?
Creator, I would ever be
A trusting, loving child to Thee.
As come to me or cloud or sun,
Father, Thy will, not mine, be done.

"Oh! ne'er will I at life repine!
Enough that Thou hast made it mine.
When falls the shadow cold of death,
I yet will sing, with parting breath,
As comes to me or cloud or sun,
Father, Thy will, not mine, be done."

The old home was now broken up by death. Parents and grandparents had all gone to be with Jesus.

We now pass over a few years of Henry's life, in which he was quietly doing the work of a preacher and pastor, and strengthening himself for his life work, that of preaching the gospel. We come to a time in his life when he was about thirty years old. We find that, some two or three years prior to this, he had married a most estimable Christian lady, and that they had set up a home and an altar of their own. As the years passed, there were born into that home children to gladden and make happy life's golden chain that binds loving hearts into holy wedlock.

Though comparatively a young man, Henry had been chosen president of his conference, and it was in the year 1893, while attending an annual meeting of his church, that a gentleman much his senior came to him, and called him by the familiar name of "Henry." That sounded strange to him. He had not been called by that name since he left home for school. Henry was his middle name, and strangers had called him by his first name, or else by his surname. His mother used to call him "Henry," but strangers had never called him by that name, and do not to this day. Henry did not know the man, and yet he realized that the man knew him and must have known him from a child. Henry also saw that the man, though a stranger, was deeply moved. Tears came into the stranger's eyes as

he held to Henry's hand. He said, "You don't know me, do you?" Henry answered, "No, I do not." The stranger then gave his name as "R. S. W—," and related to Henry the following incident of his mother's death:

"I knew your father and mother well. I lived close to them. I was present when your mother died. I lifted you upon her dying bed, and I heard you sing your little Sabbath school song, and as you sang you wept as if your heart would break. I saw your mother rejoice in the love of Christ. Her last audible prayer was that you might preach the gospel. And when I saw you to-day a minister of the gospel, I thought of your mother's last prayer."

Twenty years had intervened from the time of the death of Henry's mother till he met this stranger, friend of his parents and of their children, and all of this time Henry had never heard of his mother's prayer that he might preach the gospel. He may have heard and doubtless did hear that prayer when his mother offered it, but in the sadness of that hour, and the tears and heartaches at his mother's death, his mind retained not the remembrance of his mother's dying petition to the God of love and grace, for her little boy. God heard the prayer of Henry's dying mother and answered it without Henry's having known it. His mother prayed that he might preach the gospel, and he was preaching

the gospel; doing exactly what she had prayed he might do, and in the church of which she was a member. Henry's heart rejoiced greatly when he learned this, and praised God for His goodness and mercy to the children of men. Henry after this inquired of others about his mother's desire and prayer that he might preach the gospel, and was told by several that she had thus prayed, and that it was her heart's desire for him to be a minister of Jesus the Christ. He was her first born, and she may have given him to the Lord from childhood. Her prayer for him was answered, and is being answered even now, for he is still living and is still preaching the gospel of the Christ that he loves. The way often seemed closed to him before he entered the ministry, and in the preparation for service he encountered many difficulties, and was assailed by many temptations, but out of them all God hath delivered him. Surely God hears and answers prayer. Of this truth Henry is quite sure. He has learned this glad truth from Christian parents, God's Word, personal experience, and the evidence of a blessed inward assurance. It is nothing strange for God to answer prayer, and why should there be so little faith? In the Bible we find recorded many remarkable answers to prayer, and those who study the Bible carefully and prayerfully and obey its teachings will realize out of their own blessed experiencce that God

hears and answers the prayer of faith, and when we have learned all life's lessons we will say, "God knew the best."

THE BEST.

"Sometime, when all life's lessons have been learned,
And suns and stars forever more have set,
The things which our weak judgment here have spurned,
The things o'er which we grieved with lashes wet,
Will flash before us, out of life's dark night,
As stars shine most in deeper tints of blue,
And we shall see how all God's plans were right,
And how, what seemed reproof was love most true.

"And we shall see how, while we frown and sigh,
God's plans go on as best for you and me;
How, when we called, he heeded not our cry,
Because his wisdom, to the end could see.
And e'en as prudent parents disallow
Too much of sweet to crying babyhood,
So, God, perhaps, is keeping from us now
Life's sweetest things, because it seemeth good.

"And if, sometimes, commingled with life's wine,
We find the wormwood, and rebel,—and shrink,
Be sure a wiser hand than yours or mine,
Pours out this lotion for our lips to drink.
If we could push ajar the gates of life,
And stand within, and all God's workings see,
We could interpret all this doubt and strife,
And for each mystery could find—a key.

"But not to-day. Then be content poor heart,
God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold,
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart,
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.
And if, through patient toil, we reach the land
Where tired feet with sandals loose may rest,
When we shall clearly know and understand,
I think that we will say, 'God knew the best.'"

CHAPTER X.

IS MOTHER NEAR?

Though quite young when his parents died, Henry remembers them. He remembers that they once lived on the earth and that they died; that they taught him to love and to adore God. But he remembers very little of the incidents and circumstances connected with their death. He had been often told that they were Christians, and that they died trusting in Jesus, and that they were happy in heaven. He had been told that they could not come back to him, but that if he lived right he would some day go to them, and be with them in heaven. All of this he had good reason to believe as he grew older and studied the Bible. He would sometimes visit the graves of his parents, even in youth, and there sit by the side of the silent tombs and breathe an earnest prayer to God to help him live right, and to use him as He saw best. And even now when he can do so, he visits his dead. He fully believes that his parents have gone to be with Jesus. He earnestly desires to lead others to Christ, and to be the humble instrument in God's hands of doing much good. It has been a long time now since he has seen his mother or heard her voice. He is now past forty years, and has children of his own. Five are living on earth, and one, a

bright-eyed, flaxen-haired boy, has gone to be with Jesus in that house of many mansions. Jesus loved little children when He was on earth, and He loves them now in heaven. It was a deep night of sorrow and anguish through which Henry and his wife passed; but it had its star of hope that shone out in that still, dark, deep night of death. It was the star of hope and of promise that we shall meet our dead again in eternal life. And that beautiful, living star still shines, and becomes brighter and brighter as we come nearer and nearer to Christ, and to the eternal world.

It was on an October day when that little boy came into Henry's home, amid joy and pain. He grew into a beautiful child with flaxen curls, and eyes shading into black. He was their baby—a joy and a pride of their home. Flowers he loved, and often did he gather wild flowers—anything with bloom—and bring them and show them to his parents. He called them "My powers." He was less than two years old when, on a summer's day in June, he was taken sick, and for two weeks lingered. The ministrations of loving parental hearts and hands and that of many friends, and the skill of physicians—all could not avail. A day or two before his death the family felt that all had been done that could be done to save his life, and that they could do nothing more than to watch and hope and pray and await the dear

Master's will. For the parents had learned to say, Not my will, Father, but Thine be done. The Sabbath came, but the bell of the church of which Henry was pastor did not ring, calling the people to worship as usual. There hung over the congregation the sadness of death. Sabbath at noon, we thought he was going. Some turned away from his little bed. But he did not go on that blessed Lord's day. Monday came, the morning, and then the noon, and Johnnie breathed his last; but ere the last breath was drawn, the father bent tenderly over and kissed his dying child, and said in Christian faith, hope and love, "Good-bye, my boy, we shall meet again in the morning." The mother was well-nigh heart-broken, but with faith in God she calmly said, "Father, Thy will be done."

Twined about the breast and the hands of the little one cold in death were water lilies—flowers he loved so well—and a flower from the home and the lilies from the pond slept together. His little body was laid to rest in Pine Hill Cemetery, and there it awaits the resurrection morn. Glad morning will that be for all who love the Christ, and for those who are called to meet Him in the innocence and purity of childhood. One child saved in heaven, forever safe with Jesus. There came many letters of sympathy and consolation to Henry and his wife, and it was sweet not to be forgotten in the day of sorrow by friends

of brighter days. And so we find that one day in life may have many hues. The morning may have clouds, the noon rain, and in the evening the sun may shine again, or these may be reversed, or there may be a mingling of the raindrops with the sunshine, forming a beautiful rainbow in life. Clouds and sunshine often come on the same day. Tears and laughter are close together here in this life. But of this Henry is quite confident, that the clouds which Jesus sends are just as necessary to the flower as the sunshine. It was a sad day when death entered his home, but if the veil could have been removed only for a moment, what great and wonderful revelations might have been revealed concerning Christ and His love! How does Henry know, but in that chamber of death, his mother may have been right by his side that very moment ministering to him and to all the bereaved? It may have been his own mother that bore the spirit of his dead child to heaven and to Jesus. Henry knows not how these things may be, but he can but think that his mother is ever near him, and that she has never been far away. He likes to think that she is right by him as he writes, works and preaches. In thought he sees her near him, sees love beaming from her mild blue eyes; hears her voice calling in accents sweet; and sometimes when he meditates long upon such scenes, he pauses and looks up to see

if he may not behold her. But he sees her not with the natural eye. Yet to his mind she is near, and how beautiful she is! There is not a tear in her eyes, not a furrow in her cheek, not a pain in her breast; but glad beams of love, joy, peace, gentleness, and goodness shine out; and she in Henry's thoughts softly and sweetly whispers, "My son, it is mother. I have prayed for you. I have been near you in all life's way. I prayed for you when I was dying. I prayed that you might preach the gospel, and God hath heard my prayer. At times it seemed that you would go astray. You have wandered far off. Your feet had well-nigh slipped. But God our Father hath heard and answered prayer and saved you. Be thou faithful, my son, unto the end, and thou shalt join the triumphant family in heaven. Labor zealously to win souls to Christ, for that is your appointed mission. God will bless you and crown your efforts. God is near you, Christ is with you. The Comforter will guide you. About you are ministering spirits. Go forward. Never fear." Thoughts like these often pass through Henry's mind, and he really thinks that his mother is often, if not ever, near him. Of course he knows not how this may be, but he likes to think of it as being true.

"Flitting, flitting, ever near thee,
Sitting, sitting by thy side,
Like yon shadow all unweary,
Angel beings guard and guide."

In Rev. 22: 8-9 we read that the angel which was sent to show John the things of which he wrote said, "I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." In Hebrews 1: 14 in speaking of angels we read, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

The Psalmist says: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Ps. 34: 7.

"FOOTSTEPS OF ANGELS."

"When the hours of Day are numbered,
And the voices of the Night
Wake the better soul, that slumbered,
To a holy, calm delight;

"Ere the evening lamps are lighted,
And, like phantoms grim and tall,
Shadows from the fitful fire-light
Dance upon the parlor wall;

"Then the forms of the departed
Enter at the open door;
The beloved, the true-hearted,
Come to visit me once more;

"He, the young and strong, who cherished
Noble longings for the strife,
By the road-side fell and perished,
Weary with the march of life!

"They,the holy ones and weakly,
Who the cross of suffering bore,
Folded their pale hands so meekly,
Spake with us on earth no more!

"And with them the Being Beauteous,
Who unto my youth was given,
More than all things else to love me,
And is now a saint in heaven.

"With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes that messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine.

"And she sits and gazes at me
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies.

"Uttered not, yet comprehended,
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,
Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,
Breathing from her lips of air.

"O, though oft depressed and lonely,
All my fears are laid aside,
If I but remember only
Such as these have lived and died."

And so Henry is wont to think of his mother as being ever close to him. He believes that he would know her voice, if she could speak to him even now after a lapse of thirty years. He has reason to believe that some time he shall see her and hear her, and know her, not in the old home below, but in the new Home above, in Heaven.

He often asks himself this question, "Shall I meet my Sainted Mother?"

"Shall I meet my sainted mother,
In her home beyond the skies?
Will I see the love-light beaming,
From her tender loving eyes?
Will she know me when I meet her,
For I have changed so sadly now?
Will she see her fair-haired darling,
In this old and wrinkled brow?

"When the bells of heaven ringing,
Wake the angel's song again,
For the wanderer returning,
From the paths of sin and pain,
Will my mother there be waiting,
Waiting with her look so mild?
Will she press me to her bosom,
As she did when but a child?

"All the years of sin and sorrow,
That I've suffered since she died
Will be vanished on that morrow,
When I stand by mother's side,
Stand with her before the Saviour,
There among the blood-washed throng,
Joining in the heav'nly rapture,
Of the glad redemption song."

314035

CHAPTER XI.

A VISIT TO THE OLD HOME.

"How dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollection presents them to view!
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wild wood,
And every loved spot which my infancy knew."

On a summer's day Henry took up his church paper, and in it read a letter from a friend of his father, stating that he would be glad to have a preacher come into that neighborhood and hold a revival meeting. Henry knew that it was not far from his old home. He wrote to that friend, and offered his services, which were gladly accepted. The time was announced, and the meeting was held. The place of meeting was not more than a mile and a half from the old home, and many who had known Henry's parents, and many with whom Henry had played in childhood were there. The Lord graciously blessed that meeting. Sinners were led to Jesus, and many Christian hearts rejoiced in the Saviour's love. A church was organized at the close of the revival services. A physician who attended the meeting said to Henry, "Well, your mother dedicated you to God on her dying bed, and now here you are preaching the gospel." A friend said, "It was your father's and my father's great desire to have a church here in this community, and they were arranging for one when your father was ta-

ken sick. And now your father and my father have gone, but under the blessings of God, I have been enabled to erect this house, and you have come and preached to us and organized the church right here in the neighborhood where our parents so much desired to have a church." For such evidences and expressions, Henry thanked God and took courage. Before leaving that community, Henry visited the old home place. But the house was gone. It was on July 15, 1901, that he in company with a friend went to the place where once there had been a nice home. It was the place where Henry's mother had died. The place was all changed. The road leading thereto was well-nigh impassable. The place had passed into the hands of strangers. They knew not of the fond recollections, and the sacred memories which clustered about the old home. The house had burned down some years before, and it had never been rebuilt. The grove had been cut down. The chimneys had been pulled down. The yard and the garden had been turned into a field, and cotton was growing there. Yet the location of the house could be identified by the foundations of the chimneys. Henry walked about the place where the house had once stood. Here was his mother's room. There is where he, his brother, and sister slept. Here in another room is where his mother died. And there upon that spot, as nearly as could be

identified, where his mother breathed her last prayer and fell asleep, he uncovered his head and breathed a silent prayer to God. All so changed! He wandered across the field to where a mimosa tree was growing, and plucked a bloom and leaf. He rambled down to the spring. The way was almost impassable. Briers, shrubbery, and a barbed wire fence made it difficult to find and to reach. The path was all over-grown, but he found the spring, and there it was, very much as of yore. It was a good spring and a family living near, but in a different direction from the old home, used water from it. He stopped, drank from it, and quenched his thirst as in childhood. Here about the spring his little feet in life's early morn had toddled. There down the branch his little hands had built a dam across the stream. How happy then! What changes and scenes since! Earth is ever changing. Heaven is eternal.

Henry turned away from the sad scenes, with feelings indescribable, and thought of the new home in heaven where Jesus is fitting up mansions for those who love and serve Him. Heaven is the eternal, unchangeable home of the saved soul. Jesus said to his disciples, and through them to us, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come

again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

It is a blessed thought that, though our earthly home pass out of existence, we have an eternal home in heaven. Friends and loved ones pass out of this life one by one, but peaceful thought, that they live, and that sometime we shall go and see them. In Revelation 21: 10-27 we have a description of the beautiful city to which our loved dead in Christ are gone. And in the same book, chapter 7: 9-10, 13-17; and in chapter, 21: 5-7 we read of those who are there and of those who will enter bye and bye. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things."

"Not now, but in the coming years,
It may be in the better land,
We'll read the meaning of our tears,
And there, sometime, we'll understand."

And shall we know each other when we meet in the better land? Will Henry know his dear mother when they meet in heaven? Will she know her boy, when he reaches the golden shore? Henry believes that we shall know each other.

"When we hear the music ringing
In the bright celestial dome,
When sweet angel voices singing,
Gladly bid us welcome home
To the land of ancient story,
Where the spirit knows no care,
In that land of light and glory,
Shall we know each other there?

"When the holy angels meet us,
As we go to join their band,
Shall we know the friends that greet us
In the glorious spirit land?
Shall we see the same eyes shining
On us as in the days of yore?
Shall we feel their dear arms twining
Fondly round us as before?

"Yes, my earth-worn soul rejoices,
And my weary heart grows light,
For the thrilling angel voices,
And the angel faces bright,
That shall welcome us in heaven,
Are the loved of long ago;
And to them 'tis kindly given,
Thus their mortal friends to know.

"O, ye weary, sad and tossed ones,
Droop not, faint not by the way;
Ye shall join the loved and just ones
In the land of perfect day.
Harp strings, touched by angel fingers,
Murmured, in my raptured ear,
Evermore their sweet song lingers,
We shall know each other there."

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

And now, dear reader, I have told you this story; and in relating it have desired to help some one else traveling heavenward, and to help Christian parents that are pointing their children to Jesus, and to encourage anxious mothers who are to-day praying for their children, and to instil in the minds of the children who may read this narrative, a greater love for parents, and a faith, that will not shrink, in the prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God.

This incident has helped Henry and increased his faith in prayer. In it he sees a direct answer to prayer. The boy spoken of in these pages is at this writing an active gospel minister filling responsible positions in the church. He is indebted to friends, the printed page, private letters, and his own personal knowledge for many of the facts related herein. And when there were links missing, he has endeavored to supply them in the most natural and probable way. Henry is now in the manhood of life, and as he sends these pages forth, he earnestly prays God's blessings to rest upon them and those who may read them.

Henry's earnest prayer to God is that this story may do good and help others. May God

bless the praying mothers and fathers of every land, and may children never forget to love and to honor their parents; and may we ever revere and obey the Lord our God. Soon life's dream will be over. Shall we meet in heaven? By the grace of God, dear friend, Henry desires to meet you in our Father's house of many mansions. God has been very good and kind to him, and he is sure that He will be unto the end. "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

"He knows! He knows! The blessed thought
Does wondrous comfort bring;
He'll read our tangled lives aright,
Whether we sob or sing."

"To My Mother (postlude).

"My Mother! Manhood's anxious brow
And sterner cares have long been mine;
Yet turn I to thee fondly now,
As when upon thy bosom's shrine
My infant griefs were gently hushed to rest,
And thy low whispered prayers my slumber blest."

"I never call that gentle name,
My Mother! but I am again
E'en as a child—the very same
That prattled at thy knee; and fain
Would I forget, in momentary joy,
That I no more can be thy boy.

"I've pored o'er many a yellow page
Of ancient wisdom, and have won,
Perchance, a scholar's name; but sage
Or bard have never taught thy son
Lessons so dear, so fraught with holy truth
As those his Mother's faith shed o'er his youth."

"If by the Saviour's grace made meet,
My God will own my life and love,
Methinks, when singing at His feet,
Amid the ransomed throng above,
Thy name upon my glowing lips shall be,
And I will bless that grace for heaven and thee."

FINIS.